

Regular readers of these missives may have noticed that I have not been as prolific recently in these writings as is customary. That is not because I don't love you anymore, or because you fell off the e-mail list (which is rather obvious since you are reading this now). And, it is not because I have had nothing to say. Quite the opposite. There is a bunch going on back here in DC, and being in the majority means that I am busier with it all than has been the case the last 4 years. I could tell you about the State of the Union speech (it was quite insubstantial) or the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac proposal from the White House (with which I mostly agree mainly because it doesn't arrive at a conclusion on how to proceed) or any number of other issues. Instead, I will give you a brief update with my perspective on the two most burning issues right this minute (it is Sunday as I write this).

Egypt: Blame it on, or credit, the internet and Facebook. Totalitarian or authoritarian regimes governing a populace with few rights and less prosperity are not new. In fact, most countries have been governed this way for centuries. But, first Tunisia, now Egypt, and maybe Jordan and Syria have experienced largely peaceful public uprisings. Why? There has never been freedom of the press in such countries. The press was always a subsidiary of the government. A former Bush administration official recently told me of a Russian relative whose father was imprisoned by Stalin and thought he was wonderful. "How could you like the ruler who imprisoned you?", he was asked. He answered, "Because I knew from the papers that all other governments were much, much worse and that we were ruled benevolently". The internet has changed all that. A modern country cannot exist without computers, and with computers comes access to information outside of that country and the ability for opposition to form on a social network. Hence, people without prosperity are learning that there is a great deal of prosperity and freedom in other places. And, they want some. In addition to the aforementioned countries, some former soviet republics, as well as China, have similar risks.

I have always felt that the first objective of U.S. foreign policy is to protect the security and interests of the people of the United States. Only secondarily is it to spread Jeffersonian democracies around the world. Egypt will have elections. We want them to be off in the future some months or even farther away. In spite of recent comments by Obama's Director of National Intelligence, the Muslim Brotherhood is made up of Islamic extremists who will likely be very bad for stability and peace in the region and would probably sponsor terrorism against the U.S. But, there are no alternative secular parties out there now because Mubarak kept them from forming as alternatives to him. These will develop now, but they will take time. People much closer to this than me believe that the Egyptians will not elect the Muslim Brotherhood if they have other, strong options. We should facilitate the development of these other groups. This is very important. You all know that I do not think we should be in Afghanistan anymore in part because the country is not strategically important. Egypt is VERY strategically important. Remember that just having elections does not guarantee a result in the best interests of the U.S. or the world. There must be a free flow of information and a culture of democracy to make

them work. Remember that Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany as a result of an election, and was appointed to that office because he was so popular with the people. He did not take power in some military coup. That did not turn out so good either for the Germans or the world. Egyptians and the rest of us should work towards a better result.

Spending: This week, the House will take up the bill (Continuing Resolution or CR) which funds the government for the balance of this fiscal year (until 9/30/2011). This has to be done because of the Democrat majority's failure to enact a budget or a single appropriations bill last year. Now, the argument is about how much spending to reduce.

Remember that I believe that our national debt is the greatest threat to the security, prosperity and hegemony of the United States without a close second. We have a record annual deficit this year of \$1.5 TRILLION! We have to cut everything as much and as quickly as possible or we could lose it all. To give you an idea of how much is available to cut, the segment of federal spending that is subject to annual budgeting and appropriation (discretionary spending) has increased 38% since 2006. And, there has been very little inflation during those 4 years. Were government programs so woefully inadequate 4 years ago that it would be a tragedy to return to those spending levels?

The [Pledge to America](#) said that we would cut non-security spending to 2008 levels and would reduce spending by at least \$100 billion. The bill put together by the House Appropriations Committee falls short of that goal. Instead of cutting from actual spending amounts, they are cutting from the President's request for increased spending. Well, cutting spending increases that do not yet exist and are only proposed is not cutting! Anyway, I believe that the bill is about \$37 billion short of the amount of spending reductions that we should be making, and I am in the epicenter of an internal squabble amongst Republicans over this issue. I will offer 2 amendments to the bill this week which, if both are adopted, will satisfy both elements of the Pledge. Hence, they have been dubbed by talk show host and author Hugh Hewitt as the "pledge keeper amendments". Democrats, still in complete denial of the problem, are arguing against any cuts and instead still want to increase spending. Unbelievable. So, this is a battle amongst Republicans for how much to reduce spending by, with Democrats arguing against all of us.

The good news here is that, for the very first time in my memory, we are talking about how much actual spending we should cut, not how much we can reduce to slow or increase the growth of spending. This is very, very positive. But, the problem is so deep and the culture of spending and waste in DC so pervasive, that I will always push the envelope to do more.

I will let you know how it comes out.

Until next time, I remain respectfully,

Congressman John Campbell
Member of Congress